

This week the House of Representatives considered a variety of issues, including a bill to spur job creation by freeing small businesses from unnecessary government regulations (H.R. 3336), legislation protecting our nation against cyber security attacks (H.R. 3523), and also a measure focused on providing more accountability in federal spending (H.R. 2146). These bills will help facilitate an environment of job creation, ensure improved online security for businesses while also protecting the private information of consumers, and get a grip on the continually rising federal debt, and I was pleased to support them. Promoting economic growth is critical for our nation's recovery, and every policy enacted by the government can have an impact on this effort.

Our nation is able to continue to be the world leader on economic issues because of the dedicated members of our armed forces, working to protect our freedoms each and every day. Without the constant and determined efforts of these servicemen and women, both past and present, we would simply lose many of the daily comforts and freedoms that we often take for granted. I had the opportunity this week to visit with United States Marines stationed at The Basic School at Quantico to view their training operations in person and receive feedback from many of them about exactly what resources they need to accomplish their mission. It was a wonderful opportunity to observe firsthand the capabilities of our Marine Corps. These young Marines, many of them residents of the First District, have deployed multiple times in the last ten years to Iraq and Afghanistan. They are stationed at Quantico to help train and prepare the future leaders of our Navy and Marine Corps team. The expertise, professionalism, and selflessness of these men and women were evident from the moment I stepped onto base, and I truly appreciated spending my time with them; it was an honor.

I kept the suggestions of these Marines and other members of our armed forces in mind as the annual discussion began this week over the Fiscal Year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The NDAA is an annual piece of legislation that authorizes funding to be made available for military and defense-related programs and activities. The process begins with individual consideration in the various subcommittees of the House Armed Services Committee. As a member of the Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, I met with my colleagues on Wednesday and Thursday to discuss the outlook for our nation's sailors and Marines and the need to ensure that they are fully equipped and expertly trained. My visit with the Marines at Quantico was particularly timely for this discussion.

After the subcommittees complete discussions on the NDAA, the whole Armed Services Committee will gather to debate and pass a unified NDAA in May. The NDAA is an essential part of the policy-making process, and I am committed to guaranteeing our armed forces' continued status as the best prepared and most effectively equipped, trained, and combat ready

fighting force on the planet. The collective character of our men and women in uniform is second to none; it is essential that we provide these brave Americans with the resources they deserve. As the annual process of setting the federal budget continues in the House of Representatives, I hope you'll keep in touch with me to fill me in on your legislative priorities. I can be reached by telephone at (202) 225-4261, through my website (www.wittman.house.gov), via Facebook (www.facebook.com/reprobwittman), or on Twitter (www.twitter.com/robwittman).

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Armed Services Committee where he is the Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.